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UNCLAS HARARE 001032

SIPDIS

AF/PD FOR COX AND ROBERTSON, AF/S FOR KRAFT AND
SCHLACHTER, AF/RA FOR DIPALMA, INR/R/MR, NSC FOR
JENDAYI FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION DROC PEACE TALKS; HARARE

1. Under headline "DRC dialogue, the Sun City Agreement holds," the independent weekly "The Zimbabwe Mirror" dedicated its April 26 editorial to urging DRC talks facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, to "persuade RCD-Goma (Rally for Congolese Democracy)" to accept the partial peace settlement reached at Sun City in South Africa, in order to promote peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Excerpts:

2. "...The hope for lasting peace in the DRC was rekindled by the UN announcement on 24 April that the UN Security Council supports the partial agreement between the Kinshasa government of Joseph Kabila and one rebel group, the MLC (Congolese Liberation Movement)
...The Kabila government has announced that they are happy with a partial deal that they say is better than no deal at all. To all positive thinking people, the political cup of the DRC is now half full, and not half empty. ... Another disturbing signal coming from Sun City is the unfortunate position taken by the talks' facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire. Masire was reported to have decided to side with RCD-Goma in refusing to accept the partial deal. ... It is baffling to see the mediator of a potentially explosive situation such as that of the DRC, siding with the groups that are calling for a return to war. ... Any positive move, no matter how small, should be clutched and guarded jealously. And, the deal between the Kabila government and the MLC is not a small deal at all.

"It seems as if by refusing to accept that deal, the facilitators had missed one of the highlights of the Congolese Internal Dialogue. We therefore congratulate the UN for the timely statement released by the President of the Security Council. ...in support of the DRC partial agreement. This is the first time that the UN has acted swiftly and timely since the DRC conflict started in 1998. It could be another sign that Africa is back on the 'world' agenda! It is our hope that Sir Ketumile Masire would now persuade RCD-Goma to join the transitional government in order to promote peace not only in the DRC, but in the whole of Southern Africa."

SULLIVAN